

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCA-01 SCS-03 USIA-06 A-01 PER-01

PC-01 OPR-02 OC-06 CCO-00 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00

/039 W

-----160306Z 091376 /72

R 151440Z APR 77

FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9608

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FOR AF/W

E.O. 11652:N/A

TAGS: PINS, AMGT, OTRA, DM, US

SUBJ: TRAVEL OF CHARGE AND GENERAL RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL

WITHIN BENIN

REF: STATE 084905

1. APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT'S PROMPT REPLY TO REQUEST FOR TRAVEL
AUTHORIZATION TO GO TO TOGO FOR BREATH OF NON-MARXIST/LENINIST
AIR. REST OF EMBASSY INCLUDING PAO LA SOR, WILL REMAIN
IN ENVIRONS COTONOU IN EVENT BENINESE BECOME DIFFICULT AT BORDER.

2. CONCERNING GENERAL QUESTION OF TRAVEL LIMITATIONS, DECREE
ANNOUNCED MARCH 2 IS CONSIDERED TO BE IN EFFECT, ALTHOUGH NO
TEXT IS AVAILABLE AND THERE IS NO INDICATION WHEN, IF EVER,
IT WILL BE GAZETTED. USING "STATE OF EMERGENCY" AS JUSTIFICATION,
BENINESE OFFICIALS AT MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND AT FOREIGN MINISTRY
HAVE TOLD US VERBALLY THAT RADIO ANNOUNCEMENT WAS SUFFICIENT FOR
DECREE TO TAKE EFFECT. THIS LEAVES THE BENINESE FREE TO RESTRICT
MOVEMENT UNDER THE STATE OF EMERGENCY WITHOUT GIVING DIPLOMATIC
CORPS SOLID TEXTUAL GROUNDS ON WHICH TO DISPUTE LEGALITY UNDER
INTERNATIONAL LAW. IT IS NOW BECOMING KNOWN AS THE "PHANTOM
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DECREE."

3. FRENCH AMBASSADOR APPARENTLY BELIEVED HE COULD AVOID THE
INCONVENIENCE OF A POSSIBLE BORDER SCENE BY ASKING FOR
FOREIGN MINISTRY TO ISSUE "NECESSARY DOCUMENTS" (AVOIDING
WORD LAISSEZ PASSER) TO ALLOW HIM TO VISIT LOME FOR TWO
DAYS. PROTOCOL THEN SAID THAT THESE "DOCUMENTS"

REQUIRED SIGNATURE OF BOTH MINISTERS OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS AND INTERIOR (IE., THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE LAISSEZ-PASSER IN THE DECREE). AFTER BOUNCING BACK AND FORTH BETWEEN MINISTRIES, THE NECESSARY DOCUMENT WAS STILL UNSIGNED BY THE INTERIOR MINISTER ON THE MORNING OF DEPARTURE, AND THE FRENCH WERE TOLD THAT THE MINISTER WAS NOT AVAILABLE. FRENCH AMB SET OFF FOR BORDER, WHERE THE AUTHORITIES WERE WAITING FOR HIM AND TURNED HIM BACK. FRENCH CLAIM THAT TECHNICALLY THEY WERE NOT SEEKING LAISSEZ-PASSER, BUT EFFECT WAS SAME. WE AGREE WITH GERMAN AMB THAT THIS WAS FOOLISH MOVE, BUT IT IS TOO LATE TO RECTIFY.

4. ON APRIL 7, GERMAN AMB CROSSED INTO TOGO WITH NO DIFFICULTY, HAVING MERELY NOTIFIED BENINESE FOREIGN MINISTRY THROUGH ROUTINE NOTE VERBALE SHORTLY BEFORE DEPARTURE THAT HE WAS LEAVING THE COUNTRY. I AM SENDING SIMILAR NOTE TODAY, HOPING THAT BENINESE INEFFICIENCY WILL ENSURE THAT NO ONE READS NOTE UNTIL I HAVE RETURNED.

5. DETENTION OF AMCIT CONTINUES AND ALL OUR EFFORTS TO SEE SURETE CHIEF ON HIS BEHALF AND THAT OF SWEDISH CITIZEN ARRESTED AT SAME TIME HAVE MET WITH FAILURE. ON APRIL 14, A GERMAN FAMILY TOURING BENIN WAS TAKEN INTO CUSTODY WITH NO REASON GIVEN. GERMAN AMB'S EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AN EXPLANATION FOR THEIR ARREST, LET ALONE EFFORTS TO EFFECT THEIR RELEASE, HAVE BEEN FRUITLESS. WE SHALL KEEP DEPT INFORMED OF ANY ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENTS. THOMPSON

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TRAVEL CONTROLS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 15-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977COTON000710
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770132-0489
Format: TEL
From: COTONOU
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770454/aaaabunt.tel
Line Count: 88
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: a5f598a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 77 STATE 84905
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 30-Nov-2004 12:00:00 am
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Review Exemptions: n/a
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Review Release Date: n/a
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Secure: OPEN
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Subject: TRAVEL OF CHARGE AND GENERAL RESTRICTIONS ON TRAVEL WITHIN BENIN
TAGS: PINS, AMGT, OTRA, DM, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odb://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/a5f598a4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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